

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 DHA-02 ACDA-07 /088 W

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R 100850Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8576

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RH, NI

SUBJECT: NKOMO IN NIGERIA

1. SUMMARY. JOSHUA NKOMO HAS COME TO NIGERIA. AT PRESS CONFERENCE HE DISCUSSED GENEVA TALKS, PATRIOTIC FRONT AND ZUPO, AND OUTSIDE AID TO ZIMBABWE BEFORE AND AFTER INDEPENDENCE. HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO, IN MEETING WITH NKOMO, UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR UNITY WITHIN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT AND DECLARED THAT NIGERIA WOULD DO NOTHING TO CAUSE DIVISIONS. FMG TAKING HARD LOOK AT THE "NEW" NKOMO TO SEE IF PATRIOTIC FRONT DESERVING OF NIGERIAN SUPPORT. END SUMMARY.

2. JOSHUA NKOMO HAS ARRIVED IN LAGOS. AT PRESS CONFERENCE JAN-

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UARY 5, NKOMO SAID THAT NEITHER WHITES

NOR BLACKS WILL LOSE ANYTHING WHEN POWER TRANSFERRED TO

MAJORITY. THE NATIONALIST LEADER BLAMED BRITISH AND SMITH

REGIME FOR DELAYING GENEVA TALKS--THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN OVER

DECEMBER 20. HE ASSERTED LIBERATION WAR IN ZIMBABWE WOULD

INTENSIFY IF GENEVA CONFERENCE ENDS IN DEADLOCK.

3. NKOMO DENIED PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD BEEN FORMED ONLY FOR GENEVA TALKS. MAJOR REASON FOR THE MOVE WAS GENERALLY TO ERASE IMAGE OF DISUNITY AMONG NATIONALISTS WHICH HAD BEEN USED TO ZIMBABWE'S DISADVANTAGE. FRONT INTENDS TO CONSOLIDATE ITS POSITION AFTER INDEPENDENCE ACHIEVED. NKOMO DISMISSED NEW ZIMBABWE UNITED PEOPLES ORGANIZATION (ZUPO) AS "ANOTHER NAME FOR SMITH'S RHODESIAN FRONT" DESIGNED TO CAUSE CONFUSION IN THE COUNTRY. NEW ORGANIZATION "DOES NOT RAISE RIPPLES" AMONG ZIMBABWEANS.

4. NATIONALIST LEADER THANKED NIGERIA AND ALL OTHER "PROGRESSIVE" COUNTRIES FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE. PATRIOTIC FRONT WOULD CONTINUE TO REQUEST AID FROM "PROGRESSIVES", INCLUDING "EASTERN COUNTRIES". LATTER WOULD BE ASKED FOR "MATERIALS" TO FIGHT WAR BUT NOT "HUMAN ASSISTANCE". HOWEVER, ZIMBABWE WOULD NOT FAIL TO ASK "PROGRESSIVES" FOR MANPOWER AID IF SUCH WERE LACKING IN INITIAL POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD. ZIMBABWE'S FIGHT, HE ADDED, IS NOT AGAINST SMITH ALONE BUT ALSO WESTERN IMPERIALISM.

5. ROBERT MUGABE, WHO WAS ALSO EXPECTED TO COME, HAS NOT SHOWN UP HERE. NKOMO TOLD JOURNALISTS THAT MUGABE COULD NOT COME BECAUSE OF "A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS".

6. IN MEETING WITH NKOMO JANUARY 6, HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO SAID NIGERIA IS ENCOURAGED BY UNITY DISPLAYED BY NATIONALISTS AT GENEVA AND STRESSED NEED FOR CONTINUED COOPERATION AMONG VARIOUS GROUPS WHETHER OR NOT GENEVA SESSIONS RESUMED. PLEDGING FMG'S SUPPORT FOR NATIONALISTS, HE DECLARED THAT NIGERIA WOULD NOT WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO DIVISION IN ZIMBABWE OR CAUSE CIVIL WAR THERE. NKOMO LEFT NIGERIA ON JANUARY 8 WITH A BLAST AT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WESTERN PRESS WHICH HE ASSERTED IS FOMENTING DISUNITY AMONG THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS.

7. COMMENT: FMG HAS LONG BEEN UNHAPPY WITH FACTIONALIZED NATURE ZIMBABWE'S NATIONALIST MOVEMENT. IT WOULD PREFER TO PICK ONE GROUP TO WHICH IT COULD GIVE ITS FULL SUPPORT. SHIFTING ALIGNMENTS AND FORTUNES OF INDIVIDUAL LEADERS AND THE AIGLOU EXPERIENCE HAVE MADE NIGERIANS CAUTIOUS. THEY HAVE NOT WISHED TO BE SEEN AS INTERFERING IN UNRESOLVED LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE NOR HAVE THEY WANTED TO PICK A LOSER. NKOMO'S VISIT, THEREFORE, REPRESENTS TURNAROUND IN FMG POLICY. LAST SPRING, NIGERIANS DECLINED TO RECEIVE HIM. NATIONAL DAILY AT THAT TIME CALLED HIM "IMPERIALIST LACKEY" AND "POLITICAL ENIGMA" WHO WAS CAUSE OF DISSENSION IN NATIONALIST RANKS. FMG VIEW THEN WAS THAT ALL OLD LINE NATIONALIST LEADERS WERE INCAPABLE OF UNITING ZIMBABWEAN LIBERATION GROUPS AND THAT NIGERIA WOULD LOOK FOR NEW LEADERSHIP TO EMERGE FROM FIGHTING FORCES. IN LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THEN, PARTICULARLY GENEVA TALKS, NIGERIANS ARE TAKING LOOK AT THE "NEW" NKOMO,

TRYING TO GAUGE HIS DURABILITY AND RELATIONSHIP WITH MUGABE AND
FIGHTERS WITH VIEW TO DETERMINING WHETHER PATRIOTIC FRONT WARRANTS
FMG SUPPORT.
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Message Attributes

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